

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (previously presented) A sterilization system comprising:
a sealed sterilization container for containing items to be sterilized, the container having an inlet port and an outlet port;
a source of sterilizing fluid attachable to and detachable from the inlet port and the outlet port; and
wherein the inlet port and the outlet port comprise a passive microorganism impermeable closure wherein the container is sealed from microorganism ingress while disconnected from the source to maintain sterility of the items therein.
2. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 1 wherein the passive closure mechanism comprises a covering of a vapor permeable, microorganism impermeable material.
3. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 1 wherein the passive closure mechanism comprises a valve biased into a closed position.
4. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 1 wherein the sterilizing fluid is a chemical vapor.
5. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 4 wherein the sterilizing fluid is hydrogen peroxide vapor.
6. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 1 and further comprising a pressure differential between the inlet and outlet ports to create a flow of the sterilizing fluid through the container.
7. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 6 and further comprising a fan for inducing a pressure differential between the inlet and outlet ports.

8. (original) A sterilization system according to claim 1 and further comprising one or more baffles to lengthen a flow path between the inlet port and the exit port.

9. (previously presented) A method of sterilizing items comprising the steps of:
placing the items into a sealed sterilization container;
attaching a source of sterilizing fluid to the container;
flowing sterilizing fluid into the container through a first port to sterilize the items;
flowing the sterilizing fluid from the first port to a second port through the container out of the container through the second port and back to the source;
detaching the container from the source of sterilizing fluid; and
sealing the container from microorganism ingress whereby to maintain sterility of the items therein.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the step of sealing the container comprises having a port thereon, which is connectable to the source of sterilizing fluid, sealed with a microorganism impermeable, vapor permeable material.

11. (original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the step of sealing the container comprises automatically closing a valve prior to disconnecting the container from the source of sterilizing fluid, the valve closing a port on the container which is connectable to the source of sterilizing fluid.

12. (original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the sterilizing fluid is a chemical vapor.

13. (original) A method according to claim 12 wherein the sterilizing fluid is hydrogen peroxide vapor.

14. (cancelled)

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein flow from the source of sterilizing fluid into the container through the first port, out of the container through the second port and back to the source is continuous.

16. (original) A method according to claim 15 and further comprising the step of inducing the flow with a fan within the source.

17. (previously presented) A sterilization system according to claim 2 wherein the sterilizing fluid is a chemical vapor.

18. (previously presented) A sterilization system according to claim 17 wherein the sterilizing fluid is hydrogen peroxide vapor.

19. (previously presented) A sterilization system according to claim 2 and further comprising a pressure differential between the inlet and outlet ports to create a flow of the sterilizing fluid through the container.

20. (previously presented) A sterilization system according to claim 19 and further comprising a fan for inducing a pressure differential between the inlet and outlet ports.

21. (previously presented) A sterilization system according to claim 2 and further comprising one or more baffles to lengthen a flow path between the inlet port and the exit port.